DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 444 425 HE 033 160

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TITLE	Job-Related Values of Ethnically Diverse College Students.
PUB DATE	2000-04-27
NOTE	20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Asian American Students; Blacks; Career Planning; *Diversity (Student); Higher Education; Hispanic American Students; Labor Conditions; Minority Groups; *Quality of Working Life; Sex Differences; *Student Attitudes; Student Surveys; *Undergraduate Students; White Students; Work Attitudes; *Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS	*Ethnic Differences

ABSTRACT

This study was guided by two objectives: (1) to ascertain if college students differentiate among job-related values (i.e., those which depend on the particular place of employment); and (2) to investigate sex and ethnicity differences on the values. The participants were 80 male and 178 female undergraduate students at 14 universities or four-year colleges located throughout the country who were either enrolled in a career planning course or seeking assistance at a career center; 27 percent of participants were Asian, 19 percent Hispanic, 25 percent black, and 29 percent white; 30 percent were freshmen, 24 percent sophomores, 16 percent juniors, and 31 percent seniors. Participants completed a survey that rated eight job-related values: pleasant co-workers, flexible hours, on-the-job training, advancement, challenge, easy commute, staying put, and cultural diversity. Having pleasant coworkers and advancement were rated significantly higher than other values; staying put was rated lowest. Results also showed differences among the four ethnic groups, with students in the three minority groups rating cultural diversity significantly higher than white students. No differences in job-related values were found between males and females. (Contains 18 references.) (MKA)

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Job-Related Values of Ethnically Diverse College Students

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Paper Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association

April 27, 2000

New Orleans, LA

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Abstract

This study was guided by two objectives: to ascertain if college students differentiate among job-related values (i.e., those which depend on the particular place of employment) and to investigate sex and ethnicity differences on the values. The participants were 80 male and 178 female undergraduate university students who were either enrolled in a career planning course or seeking assistance at the career center. The participant's ethnicity was as follows: 27% Asian, 19% Hispanic, 25% Black, and 29% White. Participants rated eight job-related values. Findings demonstrated that students do differentiate among job-related values. Having pleasant coworkers and advancement were rated the highest, while staying put was rated lowest. Results also showed differences among the four ethnic groups on the values. More specifically, students in the three minority groups rated cultural diversity significantly higher than White students. No differences on the job-related values were found between males and females. Findings from this study have implications for future research, as well as practice.

Job-Related Values of Ethnically Diverse College Students

Consideration of values is an integral component in the career exploration and decision-making process (Hurt & Holen, 1976; Katz, 1980; Katz & Shatkin, 1983; Sampson, Stripling, & Pyle, 1978). "Work values are defined as qualities (Super, 1970) or preferences (Pryor, 1979) that satisfy needs and priorities (Pine & Innis, 1987) in relation to work and other activities" (Walsh et al., 1996, p. 263). Within work-related values there appear to be two types: occupation-related values and job-related values. This differentiation is based on the framework used in SIGI PLUS, a popular, computerized career guidance system in which values are an integral part. Occupation-related values can be linked directly with occupations because occupations can be rated on these values. For example, income varies across occupations, and thus when an individual rates this value as essential or extremely important he/she can be linked with occupations (e.g., lawyer) that meet this criterion. Meanwhile, job-related values depend on a particular work environment. For instance, having pleasant coworkers cannot be linked with a specific occupation because whom you work with will depend on your particular place of employment, rather than your occupation. In research and within the career counseling process, job-related values are often neglected. Kosnik (1979, as reviewed by Schreier, 1981) pointed out that there is plenty of information on how to link personal information to occupations, but once one has identified an occupation, it is difficult to find advice on how to choose an organization within which to work. Part of this "advice" needs to be based on the consideration of job-related values. Therefore, this study focuses on job-related values.

Within the value-based, holistic model, Brown (1996) implies that it is important that values be prioritized and crystallized. In other words, individuals need to differentiate among values because not all values can be fulfilled at the same level of satisfaction simultaneously. One study (Coleman & Norris, 1997) has demonstrated that college students do differentiate among values, rating security and income significantly higher than other occupation-related values (i.e., those that occupations can also be rated on) and leisure significantly lower. Schreier (1981) found that college students place a higher priority on opportunity for advancement and job security than

leisure activities and prestige of the job. Another study also demonstrated differentiation by having students rank order the values (Kosnik, 1979, as reviewed by Schreier, 1981). The values with higher rankings were opportunity for advancement and job security; while, leisure and prestige/image were ranked lower.

Another proposition in Brown's values-based, holistic model (1996) is that sex and culture influence opportunities and socialization and therefore, "there will be differences in values between males and females within cultural subgroups as well as across cultural subgroup" (p. 347). Research has demonstrated these differences when examining primarily occupation-related values. Norris, Katz, and Chapman (1978) found that men rated leadership, income, and independence significantly higher than women; whereas, women rated helping others, early entry into the field, and working in one's interest field significantly higher than men. Similarly, other studies have found that men rate extrinsic rewards, such as income and advancement, higher than women (Beutell & Brenner, 1986), and women tend to value intrinsic rewards, such as helping others, more than men (Brenner, Blazini, & Greenhaus, 1988; Bridges, 1989). More recently, sex differences were also found on occupation-related values with males rating income and leisure significantly higher than females and females rating security, variety, and contribution to society significantly higher than males (Coleman & Norris, 1997). In a study involving a mix of occupation-related and job-related values, Harris and Earle (1986) found that women were more likely to select as an important value kinds of people with whom one works and kind of workplace than were men. They also found that when participants were asked to select the single work value considered most important, chance to learn new things, job security, and kind of people with whom one works were the three most popular choices for both men and women.

Research examining ethnic group differences on values is limited. Brenner and colleagues (1988) found that African-Americans in managerial positions place a higher value on independence than White-Americans. They also found an interaction between sex and ethnicity: White-American females rated extrinsic outcomes higher than White-American males and African-American males placed a greater emphasis on extrinsic outcomes than their female counterparts. Vondracek and

colleagues (1990), comparing American and Japanese junior high and high school students also found an interaction between sex and ethnicity, or in this case country, on 8 of the 13 subscales of the Work Aspect Preference Scale. Findings indicated that American students scored significantly higher on all subscales except creativity. Using a college sample in the US, Leong (1991) found differences in work value ratings. Asian-Americans rated extrinsic and security value clusters significantly higher than White-Americans. He did not examine the sex-ethnicity interaction.

These studies taken together demonstrate that individuals differentiate among values, there are sex and ethnicity differences, as well as a sex-ethnicity interaction. However, the values predominantly used in these studies were occupation-related values, rather than job-related values. Therefore, this study, focusing exclusively on job-related values, was guided by two major objectives. The first was to explore if college students differentiate among job-related values (i.e., do they rate values differently?). The second objective was to test Brown's (1996) proposition within his value-based, holistic model, which states that "there are differences in values between males and females within cultural subgroups as well as across subgroups" (p. 347). Thus, sex and ethnicity differences, as well as their interaction, were investigated.

Method

Sample

Participants were 80 male and 178 female undergraduate students at 14 universities or 4-year colleges located throughout the country. Their mean age was 20.65 (SD = 3.03). Using the ethnicity classifications from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88, National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1994), the participants' ethnicity was as follows: 27% Asian, 19% Hispanic, 25% Black, and 29% White. Originally the sample consisted of 367 Whites, however, in order to examine ethnic differences with comparable sample sizes, a stratified, random sample of 75 White students with 30% males and 70% females was taken. The selected subset did not differ from the subset not selected.

With regard to year in school, 30% were freshmen, 24% sophomores, 16% juniors, and 31% seniors. Most (83%) had declared a major with the majority of those who had declared being

in social and behavioral sciences (27%) and arts and humanities (21%). The majority of students aspired either to obtain a master's degree (38%) or a doctoral degree (29%). In terms of occupational aspirations, many aspired to professional occupations requiring at least a bachelor's or master's degree (36%), such as social worker or accountant; professional occupations requiring a doctoral or professional degree (24%), such as physician or lawyer; and school teacher (11%).

Measure

Participants completed the College Students' Survey: Work Values, Interests, and Skills. This questionnaire, based primarily on the self-assessment section of SIGI PLUS, a computerized career guidance system, consisted of demographics; work values; interest, skill, and importance of activities; academic interest fields; and definitions. The question on ethnicity used the classifications from the NELS: 88 (NCES, 1994). For purposes of this study only eight job-related values (i.e., pleasant coworkers, flexible hours, on-the-job training, advancement, challenge, easy commute, staying put, cultural diversity) were used. Cultural diversity was included among the values in the survey, although it is not a value used in SIGI PLUS. Participants rated the importance of each of these values on a 9-point scale ranging from none (0) to greatest (8).

Procedure

The data from this convenience sample were collected by career counselors, professors, and administrators at 14 universities and 4-year colleges located throughout the country. The survey was distributed to students during career guidance classes or workshops and to students seeking assistance at the campus career center. The universities and colleges were located in the western, south-eastern, and eastern regions of the country.

Results

A repeated-measures design using the multivariate analysis of variance approach, as described by Lewis (1993), was employed. The within-subjects part of the design yielded several significant results. The main effect of values was found to be significant, Pillai's = .56, $F(7, 244) = 43.91$, $p < .001$ ($\eta^2 = .58$). This was followed by 28 paired t-tests, using the Bonferroni

inequality (alpha/number of tests = .05/28 = .002) to control for Type I error. Having pleasant coworkers and advancement were rated significantly higher and staying put was rated significantly lower than all other values (Figure 1).

The ethnicity-by-values interaction was also significant, Pillai's = .22, $F(21, 738) = 2.88$, $p < .001$ ($\eta^2 = .08$). This was followed by eight one-way ANOVAs, again using the Bonferroni inequality (.05/8 = .006). Significant differences were found on cultural diversity with the Asian, Hispanic, and Black students rating this significantly higher than White students (Table 1, Figure 2). Additionally, significant differences on the value advancement were found. Black students rated this value significantly higher than both White and Hispanic students. No other significant differences were found. These results need to be interpreted cautiously given the small effect size.

The sex-by-values interaction was not significant, Pillai's = .06, $F(7, 244) = 2.03$, $p = .052$. Also, the interaction of ethnicity, sex, and values was also not significant, Pillai's = .07, $F(21, 738) = .89$, $p = .604$.

The between-subjects part of the design yielded a significant main effect for ethnicity, $F(3, 250) = 5.80$, $p = .001$ ($\eta^2 = .07$), such that Asian and Black students rated the values overall significantly higher than White students (Table 1). There were no significant differences between Hispanic and White students nor among the three minority groups.. Lastly, the main effect of sex [$F(1,250) = 1.02$, $p = .312$] and the interaction between ethnicity and sex [$F(3, 250) = 1.81$, $p = .146$] were not significant.

Discussion

The results suggest that students differentiate among job-related values, rather than rate all values of great importance; however, all values were of at least moderate importance. Having pleasant coworkers and advancement were rated significantly higher than all other values, while staying put was rated the lowest. The high ratings of advancement and pleasant coworkers support earlier work by Schreier (1981) and Harris and Earle (1986), respectively. In contrast to another finding by Harris and Earle (1986), on-the-job learning was not among the highest rated values, as they found in their sample of applicants for unskilled and semi-skilled positions in a business

setting. This difference in findings may be due to the types of samples--college students versus job applicants for positions probably not requiring a college degree. Future research could examine this job-related value within occupations requiring college degrees. In terms of informing counseling practice, given that students differentiate among values, counselors should be alert for students who do not differentiate among the values. As Brown and Crace (1996) state, "When the values within the values system lack clarity and are poorly prioritized, the result is a lack of motivation, poor decision-making, and dissatisfaction" (p. 219). Students who differentiate among job-related values will be better able to focus on those work environment aspects that are important to them when they are researching an organization for employment and during an interview. Their highly-rated values may be used in the decision-making process when deciding among offers for employment.

Only limited support was found for Brown's proposition regarding cultural and sex differences on the values. In this study, the interaction between ethnicity and values was significant with the three minority groups rating cultural diversity significantly higher than the White students. While this finding is not surprising, it does continue to raise the issue of accessibility to all occupations for all people, regardless of such aspects as ethnicity and religion. It also suggests that counselors need to help students find effective strategies for inquiring about diversity in the workplace.

Another significant difference within ethnicity-values interaction was on the value of advancement. Black students rated this value significantly higher than both White and Hispanic students. Perhaps advancement was rated higher by Black students than White students because of the perceived glass-ceiling for advancement of minorities. This, however, fails to explain why Black and Hispanic students were different. One possible explanation is that the most of the Hispanic (81.6%) and Asian (85.5%) students attended college in California; while, only 26.2% of the Black students did. In a study comparing values profiles of community college and university students in the Midwest, Southwest, and Southeast, Sampson and colleagues (1978) did not find significant differences. However, the values examined were predominantly occupation-related and

the ethnicity of the participants was not given. Future research could investigate if the socialization process and emphasis on advancement is different depending on ethnicity and on one's location in the country. Additionally, research, as well as practice, can explore how opportunities for advancement are perceived by ethnically diverse students and investigate what type of advancement opportunities they expect or hope for when they find a position.

On the remaining six job-related values no ethnicity differences were found, although Brown (1996) suggests that there will be differences between cultural groups because of socialization. Possibly differences are not observed on six of the values because the socialization process for these six values is similar across cultures or the socialization process in college has influenced ratings. Future research could explore this area, as well as examine if there are differences among freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, which may shed light on the socialization process in college with regards to these job-related values.

There were also significant differences among the ethnic groups across the values. More specifically, Asian and Black students rated the values significantly higher than White students. Thus, when comparing profiles among the different ethnic groups, one may observe that White students' profiles may be lower than Asian and Black students. This may be important for norming information or useful in counseling situations involving ethnically diverse groups of students. It should, however, be noted that there was not a significant difference between Hispanic and White students. This finding needs to be interpreted cautiously given the relatively small effect size. Again, this finding may be a result of socialization processes or location differences.

The ethnicity-sex-values and sex-values interactions were not found to be significant. This is contrary to Brown's (1996) proposition. It may be that his proposition was based on research of occupation-related values, rather than job-related values. For example, Brenner and colleagues (1988) found an interaction between sex and ethnicity on work-related values. Future research needs to address this again to ascertain if the findings here hold with other populations, such as working adults.

In summary, this study of job-related values found support for the notion that students differentiate among values. This study also found limited support for Brown's (1996) proposition regarding cultural differences in values, but did not find support for sex differences. While job-related values are probably not the focus during the decision-making process of finding a career, they are important during later stages, such as during job searches, interviewing, and deciding among offers.

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Table 1

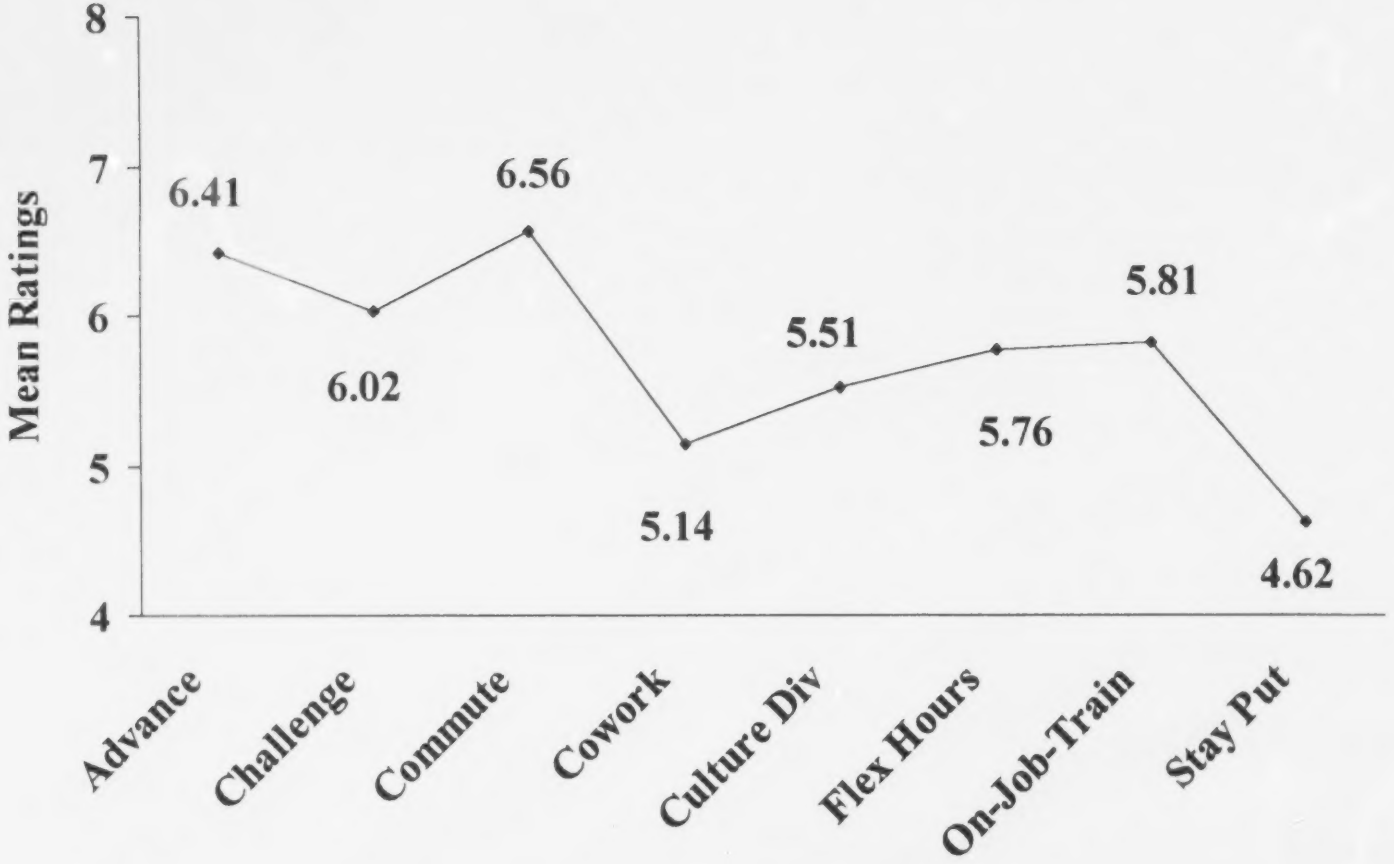
Descriptive Statistics for the Job-Related Values by Ethnic Group

	Asian		Hispanic		Black		White		Total	
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Advancement	6.51	(1.48)	6.10	(1.53)	7.08	(1.07)	5.95	(1.84)	6.41	(1.58)
Challenging	5.93	(1.50)	5.82	(1.39)	6.36	(1.47)	5.95	(1.62)	6.02	(1.51)
Easy Commute	5.10	(1.87)	5.16	(1.28)	5.36	(1.96)	4.99	(1.81)	5.14	(1.77)
Pleasant Coworkers	6.87	(1.26)	6.73	(1.34)	6.19	(1.82)	6.47	(1.67)	6.56	(1.56)
Cultural Diversity	5.94	(1.62)	5.82	(1.75)	6.23	(1.83)	4.29	(2.43)	5.51	(2.11)
Flexible Hours	5.84	(1.77)	5.90	(1.54)	6.05	(1.66)	5.53	(1.87)	5.76	(1.75)
On-Job-Training	5.71	(1.09)	5.67	(1.45)	5.84	(1.71)	5.80	(1.58)	5.86	(1.46)
Staying Put	4.64	(1.91)	5.14	(2.01)	4.66	(1.97)	4.23	(2.36)	4.62	(2.09)
Total	5.82	(.91)	5.79	(.74)	6.03	(1.12)	5.35	(.96)		

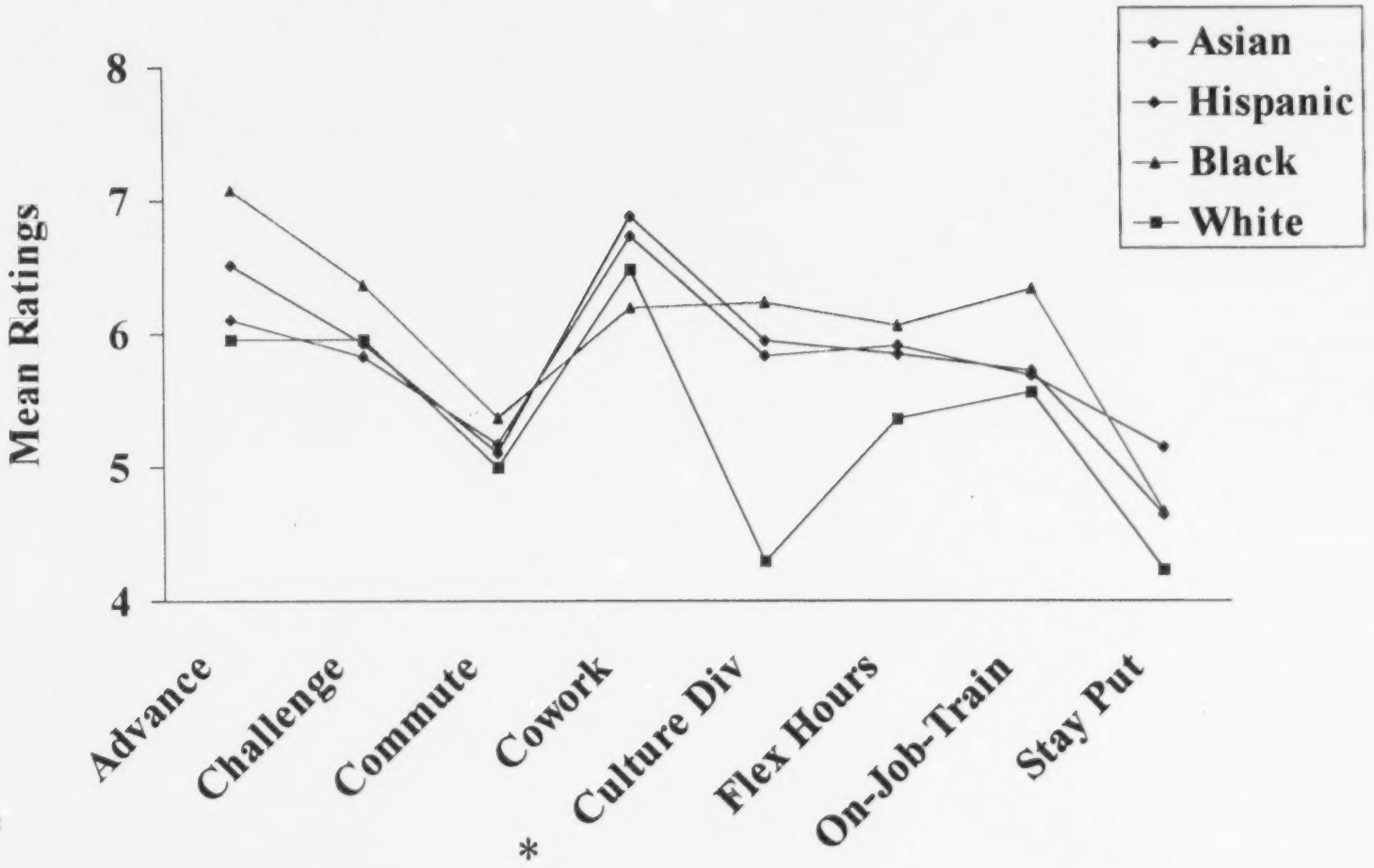
Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mean ratings for each value.

Figure 2. Mean ratings for each value by each ethnic group.



Pillais-trace=.56, F(7, 244)=43.91, p<.001



Pillais-trace=.23, F(21, 738)=2.88, p<.001